



# Vernon Area Cable Advisory Council

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## VERNON AREA CABLE ADVISORY COUNCIL Minutes of Meeting dated September 7, 2016

Community Voice Channel Conference Room  
105 Notch Road  
Bolton, Connecticut

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Attending Members: Paul Batterson, Tolland Representative; Justin Waine, Ellington; Elaine Buchardt, Andover; Larry Perosino, Tolland; Ed Meincke, Hebron

Attending Guests: John Bairos, Comcast; Nick Lavigne, CVC Executive Director

1. **Call to Order. Review of last minutes.** Paul Batterson called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. in the Community Voice Channel Meeting Room. Council members reviewed and approved the minutes of the June, 2016 meeting.
2. **Comcast Report** – John Bairos reported that this is the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Comcast's Internet Essentials program which provides home internet service for \$9.95 a month to families with children who participate in the free school lunch program. The program has recently been expanded to residents of HUD housing.

Paul Batterson inquired about how Comcast gets the word out to eligible families of this service. John Bairos said Comcast has exceeded providing this service to one million families nationally. It is only available to families who fall in Comcast service areas. They promote it at school fairs, open houses and in public service announcements in several languages. He said Comcast also promoted it to Literacy Volunteers of Hartford and has donated computers to the organization as well. He provided some flyers to Board members. Ed Meincke said he will bring one to the Superintendent of Schools for RHAM High.

John Bairos said Comcast's customer service has created a partnership with UPS for returning equipment. Customers can now also pay bills using Western Union and at 7-11. He reported that Comcast finished up a successful Olympics, and the programs were well watched. Comcast is continuing to work on enhancing accessibility programs.

Justin Waine asked if there were any updates on negotiations with the YES Network. John Bairos said the season is almost over, and there has been no agreement to date.

3. **CVC Report** – Nick Lavigne noted that Elaine Buchardt has recently joined the CVC Board. The CVC also has a new part-time employee, Kristine, who will be looking for fundraising and grant opportunities. She has a number of connections which should be helpful and is working out well. Nick said they had a grant writer who is near to finalizing a grant for the CVC. They want to focus on updating the studio with more HD cameras and other equipment. Nick said right now they have five HD cameras and they try to keep with close brands in order to keep the same style of image produced.

Nick Lavigne said upcoming events for the CVC will be the Hebron Harvest Fair this month, and they will be doing some filming there. At the end of the month, they will be holding a Family Feud style game show with seniors from the various high schools in their catchment area. They have a professional comedian lined up to host the event. They will also be holding their annual Meet Santa event in December.

Nick noted there were several people leaving the CVC as this group was arriving. He said they are part of their studio learning sessions they have been holding, where they create a talk show and do interviews of interesting people. This was part of a final activity for people who are finishing up the sessions, as an effort to keep people involved.

Larry Perosino asked about fundraising activities for the CVC and if they, in general, have any impact on the amount of funding the CVC gets from Comcast. Nick Lavigne said that PURA sets the amount they receive, but he does have to report how much money they raise in their own fundraisers. He explained that the fundraising is all used to enrich the CVC's services and equipment. If anything would impact what they get from Comcast, it would more likely be the competition with other cable suppliers.

Paul Batterson noted a nice article in the Journal Inquirer recently about the CVC.

Justin Waine commented on the Guide that the CVC is now on, saying it is very good and helpful. Nick Lavigne noted that more people are watching their programming because they can see what the programs are and get their descriptions. He said theirs is the first public service channel to get on the Guide, thanks to John Bairos' help.

Nick Lavigne said in the future they are hoping to have a complete HD studio and they hope to get one HD channel changed over from Comcast for them.

4. **Treasurer's Report** – Paul Batterson distributed copies of the latest Treasurer's Report. The only activity was for payment of the Recording Secretary for the last meeting. The balance stands at \$2,737.16.
5. **Other Matters/Adjournment** - Larry Perosino suggested that now with Elaine Buchardt on the CVC Board, a regular agenda item should be an update from her on Board matters, with a short finance report from them. Members were in agreement.

The next VACAC meeting was set for Wednesday, December 7 at 7:00pm in the Community Voice Channel Conference Room. Larry Perosino made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 p.m., seconded by Justin Waine. Motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annie Gentile  
Recording Secretary